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HOME-GROWN CEREALS AND PANTRY PESTS

Whether the home-grown cereals are wheat flour, whole-wheat breakfast food, corn meal, or rice, they must be given just as much care to protect them from insect pests in warm weather as any cereals bought in packages at the store. In fact, it may be even more difficult to store these products under household conditions than when they have been subjected to a thorough sterilizing treatment in a mill or factory and then sealed in airtight packages. Cereal beetles or weevils can live for a long time on very small quantities of dry cereal that they find in cracks, corners, and crevices of flour bins, pantries, and kitchen closets. When the new lot of cereal comes in, the eggs may already be in the old container ready to hatch out into larvae which soon become very troublesome.

So it pays to clean out all cereal receptacles thoroughly before new material is put in them, and also to go over the pantry shelves carefully with a stiff brush and soap and hot water to remove any old crumbs of cereal, flour, or bread that may be lodged out of sight, or any dust or lint which might harbor insect eggs.

The Indian-meal moth is one of the cereal pests that make a loose webbing sometimes found in cereal boxes. Cleanliness and heat are the best methods of ridding the kitchen and storeroom of meal beetles and moths. All infested material should be burned. All bags and containers in which foods are to be stored should be sterilized.

Put away promptly any home-grown cereals in clean containers with tight lids and, if possible, do not keep too much on hand during the warm weather. The flavor will be better and the chance of insect infestation will be less if cracked wheat and water-ground corn meal, especially, are prepared in small quantities that will be quickly used.

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